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DRAMA

A MONTHLY RECORD OF THE THEATRE
IN TOWN AND COUNTRY
AT HOME & ABROAD



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6d.

Published by
THE BRITISH DRAMA LEAGUE
8 ADELPHI TERRACE
LONDON
W.C.

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DRAMA

VOL. 10

JULY MCMXXXII

NUMBER 10

THE JOURNAL OF THE BRITISH DRAMA LEAGUE

PLAYS OF THE MONTH

By Philip Page

POSSIBLY it is because the art of Miss Irene Vanbrugh and Miss Marie Tempest is so exquisite that their performances are greeted with the monotonous grumble that their plays are not good enough for them. At the same time, the difficulty of writing masterpieces which have as a pivot a strongly defined personality neither girlish nor romantic must not be overlooked.

Theoretically to fit Miss Tempest or Miss Vanbrugh with a fine comedy should be easy. Actually it is nothing of the sort, and I was surprised as well as gratified to find "The Vinegar Tree" and "The Price of Wisdom" not without intrinsic merit. Miss Tempest has been the more fortunate, for "The Vinegar Tree" could be a tolerable entertainment even without her. It gives the lie to those who are fond of declaring that from America no subtlety can come, for its leisured polish suggested the St. James's Theatre of 1902 rather than of 1932, and for this the alteration of the locale from somewhere in Virginia to somewhere in Essex cannot be held responsible. Here is conventional country-house intrigue adorned with wit—not spread plentifully, but it is there—and it was most admirably acted not only by the glittering and wholly adorable person who heads the cast.

Miss Tempest, with a grown-up daughter and a semi-senile husband, showed that attempted elopement in such circumstances can be neither ludicrous nor pathetic, and her chuckle is always a trump card. One scene, with which she had nothing to do, might have been awkward, for anything involving a young girl offering herself to a middle-aged man because the boy to whom she is engaged has told her that she is not sufficiently a woman of the world, requires skilled handling.

This it received from Miss Celia Johnson and Mr. Henry Daniell, the latter a trifle owl-like.

In "The Price of Wisdom" at the Ambassador's, Miss Irene Vanbrugh had only to "manage" people with the Vanbrugh charm and the Vanbrugh technique. The play had its points. Unfortunately the managed were a dull crew and I could not bring myself to care a threepenny bit what happened to them except that I longed for the death of the more priggish ones. Miss Vanbrugh saved us from a thoroughly mediocre evening, Mr. Harvey Braban helping pluckily with the salvage.

Mr. De Valera's further discussions with British Cabinet Ministers coincided with the production at the Globe of the Sinn Fein play "Between Ourselves." If ever this is produced in Dublin the fun will start and will go on—almost certainly dangerously. But a London audience clapped the anti-British speeches and the anti-Irish speeches alike and there were no casualties. Revolver firing, rather too much of it, took place only on the stage, where realism was further indicated by an irritating repetition of the word which rhymes with "ruddy" and is uglier.

The plot of "Ourselves Alone" has done service in most of the thousand and one plays in which a member of one political party loves and is loved by someone on the other side. In this case the authors were much happier with their political blood and thunder than in the task of making the course of true love eventually run smooth by means of a display of quite preposterous Quixotism.

Mr. Harry Hutchinson as a fanatical Sinn Feiner made hate positively alive, but, fair though the play attempts to be to both sides, Sinn Fein had allowed its opponents to collar

the better actors. The production of this piece at the Globe, after a piece of preliminary Sabbath-breaking, was worth while if only because of Mr. Hutchinson and, of course, Miss Sara Allgood.

Musical comedies, one not spectacular but quite amusing and the other very spectacular but not in the least amusing, have been a feature of the month. "Tell her the Truth" at the Saville is of the same type as its predecessor—no chorus but a lot of Mr. Bobby Howes. "The mixture as before" is sound policy at this theatre, and Mr. Howes is indefatigably lovable. Mr. Alfred Drayton remains on from "For the love of Mike," and if little of the humour remains on of "Nothing but the Truth," on which this play is founded, there is in it an intrinsic cheeriness aided by some songs, good of their kind and mercifully few.

And no musical-comedy has ever allowed its leading lady to be so effaced, which in itself is an original touch and one to be welcomed or not, according to the point of view.

"Casanova," on the other hand, shows a continuity of the Coliseum policy without so happy a result. It has cost much more even than "White Horse Inn" and instead of a few foreign performers there is a positive platoon of them. The expensive scenery is lovely to look upon until it is turned round and round mechanically, when it merely blithers one.

Miss Dorothy Dickson I found charming but wasted, while Miss Marie Lohr, also rather relegated to the background, was so excellent when, as the Empress Maria Theresa, she had something to get her teeth into, that one regretted the prominence of some singularly ineffective importations from Germany. Of the three gentlemen who play Casanova I saw the foreign one, Signor Autori, who has a loud voice and a sprightly way with him but did not suggest Casanova. Nor, for that matter, did "Casanova."

Financially, one is given to understand, Sir Arthur Pinero's play "A Cold June" was a failure. But it had much in it that was diverting and enjoyable. It is, of course, a minor work. Yet I do not think it will be forgotten. If in years to come a series of Pinero revivals are the vogue, "A Cold June" should figure among them. Sir Arthur has rarely written a better first act.

THEATRE-GOING IN SPAIN

By Joseph Locke

AT ten-fifteen, when many people in England are bolting up for the night, we, in Madrid, decide to go to the theatre. Within a few minutes our cab is stranded outside the Teatro Calderón in a crowd which thickens at the openings in the wall where tickets are bought. For about half-a-crown each we purchase stalls and are shewn to our seats by a knee-breeched official. He, alone, is almost worth the money. We have just time to notice that the theatre is box-shape but extremely lofty for the small area of the floor. We are still looking for the ceiling when the lights are extinguished.

You would imagine that where theatres commence so late unpunctuality would be unknown, and that at last the problem of the shin-kicking, seat-banging late comer had been eliminated. Not a bit of it. Madrid is the home of the problem. It flowers here in luxuriance. Half the audience is late and a hot reception it gets when it streams in. It is impossible to concentrate upon any of the First Act. So we give ourselves up to the domestic war in the auditorium between the angry punctuals and the defiant late comers. The early birds shush the interrupters; the interrupters, instead of sneaking to their seats, feel that they stand for something deathless and traditional in Spain, the right to be late. Sibilant waves of sound from stalls and circle overwhelm the stage. The tactics of the drawlers are irritating. If they assembled in the hall and invaded the theatre in batches, to the accompaniment of a brass band, we should have a fair time left to enjoy the play. They are not so merciful. They enter in a persistent trickle throughout the whole of the first hour. I begin to wonder what Mr. St. John Ervine would do. Perhaps he would stand up and publicly protest. Useless. Even his clarion voice would fail to penetrate the noise. Perhaps he would commit murder. That's better. Murder by St. John Ervine in Madrid Theatre. At that moment a stout Spaniard jumps on my toes and his Señora falls into my lap.

THEATRE-GOING IN SPAIN

Directly the curtain falls a storm of shouting suddenly breaks out at the rear. This must be another revolutionary. The roar comes from a semi-circle of newsvendors who have burst into the place like newsboys in the interval of "Late Night Final." With the latest edition of an evening paper we lean, with the rest, against the wall of the foyer. There is no bar. And in view of the number of courses in a Spanish dinner a bar is scarcely necessary. A clinic, perhaps, would be profitable.

We reassemble, reunited now, old differences forgotten, eager for the play. It is a lyrical comedy in verse, by Frederico Romero and Guillermo Fernandez Shaw, and costumed in the manner of 1868. Unfortunately the new unanimity of the audience is soon shattered and a fresh struggle emerges between those who want to applaud the best songs and hear them repeated and those who want to hear the play performed without interruption. I like to think that many who were ready to assault each other in Act I may now be fighting together on the same side either to defend vociferous appreciation or in the cause of silence to the end. Those standing for the inflation of enthusiasm applaud; the deflators hiss, whereupon the inflators take a good breath and cheer lustily. The hissing rises angrily. The players, of course, are on the side of enthusiasm and time after time the silent ones suffer encores and defeat.

Applause breaks out not only at the end of a song but at the end of any long speech which is well delivered. The player, whatever he is doing—about to be knifed or on the verge of strangling his sweetheart—suspends action, relaxes, draws himself up and bows charmingly. This practice is observed even in the excitement of the bull ring. A matador applauded for a specially skilful encounter will take a call while his colleagues are keeping the bull occupied in another part of the arena.

For queer ways of spending the interval the Olympia Theatre at Barcelona provides the best opportunities. In the corridor are weighing machines and devices for football matches by mechanical men fixed inside glass cases, like those to be seen upon any well-equipped seaside pier. It is a strange way of spending ten minutes between two Acts of Opera. Perhaps some such means

are necessary to keep opera-goers awake. For you are lucky if you get away by half past two in the morning. The Opera finishes at about two and then, as a final make-weight of delight, there is a Ballet. A seat is easily obtained at the Opera as the Olympia can absorb all who want to go; and there are plenty of trams and cabs to take you home, even at that hour in the morning.

The lachrymose writers of reminiscences who deplore the passing of the old music hall as a symptom of the decay of civilisation should take hope, visit San Sebastian and die. Turning into a variety hall in a side turning of that fashionable town I rejoice to read the following notice in gigantic letters over the proscenium:

"The throwing of any kind of object at the stage is severely punished by the Authorities.

The public is requested to bear this in mind in order to avoid the consequences and is requested in its own interest to keep silence during the play so that the work of the artistes may be duly appreciated."

A piano is being mended and tuned by a nigger, wielding a screw driver. The piano is placed so that the conductor of the orchestra can play it in occasional off-moments from the actual work of conducting the band. There are very few women in the audience. We sit at little round marble-topped tables and the best people have their boots cleaned by a professional polisher. There are two circles, festooned with coloured lights. The ground floor is sober, the first circle less sober, the second distinctly inebriated. But the ground floor has several hours in which to catch up with the gallery as the proceedings will last till four in the morning. Already, well before midnight, a heated discussion is taking place between two customers on the one side and two waiters and a porter on behalf of the management. The bad beer—there is no wine—has begun its work. I will say of the artistes that they did not unduly disturb the quarrel. The nigger, who plays the drum, takes a long pull from his cigar at each interval. The conductor communicates with the wings by means of a telephone made at home out of gas tubing, which coils its way over the footlights. With a crescendo of castanets appears a fat woman

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dressed as a jockey. She wears a blue and white peak cap, a white vest, and very short dark blue knickers. She bears the number "69". The implication that there can be 68 other similar beings in the universe is intriguing. The appreciation of the second circle grows like the thunder of an on-coming storm. Her knees may be red. What of that?

Most of the turns are dancers and the first programme is completed within forty-five minutes—about eleven o'clock—when the artistes are completely re-dressed—pardon the solecism—and the turns given again. The management can afford variety when dresses take so little material. There are three such houses and by midnight a certain liveliness

is apparent. The boxes have degenerated and now sing their own songs. Floor and gallery are on shouting terms. The conductor bangs upon the piano, from which the front has fallen out, and the nigger may smash the drum yet.

In the gardens of Spain we find rest and delight after these queer evenings. Here, at the Seneca memorial in the gardens of Cordoba or the Quintero memorial at Seville, we take down a volume from the stone bookshelves and read in a cool, green retreat, where fountain-ripple and bird-song weave patterns of beauty upon the silence. Not for us, we vow, the dust and clatter of the playhouse. Not, at any rate, until late, very late, at night.

MORE PRACTICAL NOTES ON PLAY PRODUCTION

By A. K. Boyd

A sequel to the same writers's much-appreciated article on a similar subject which appeared in the April number of "Drama."

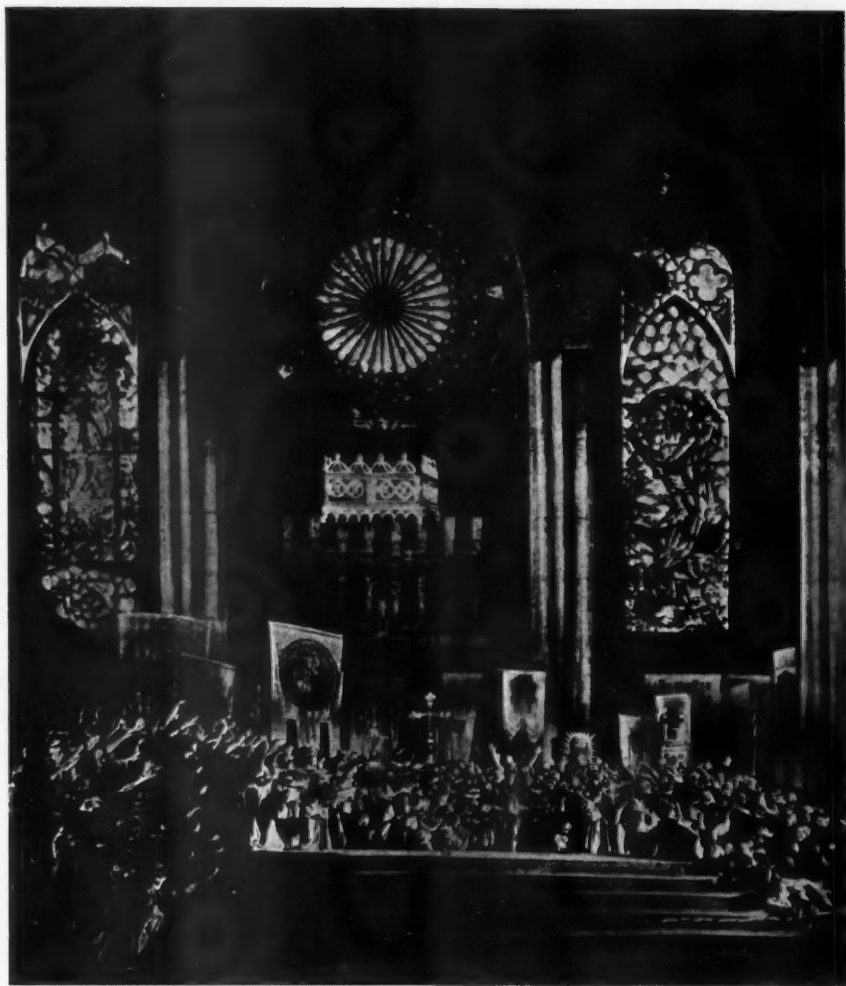
IN continuation of a previous article in "Drama," the following points deserve the consideration of amateur producers who wish to improve the technical standard of their productions.

1. **ON THE CONTROL OF LAUGHTER.** This is one of the most difficult matters in production. Laughter in an audience is largely unpredictable and defies analysis. It varies with different audiences, with different times of the day, and with different days of the week. Moreover amateurs are at a serious disadvantage in this, as in other matters, because they can rarely profit by the experience of a run. The subject can best be treated under two headings:

(a) Inopportune laughter. This is placed first because it is the more important. The unwanted laugh means, at best, a loss of dramatic illusion, at worst, a breaking of emotional tension, and must be eliminated at all costs. Fortunately it is more easily predictable than laughter of the other kind. Many producers, who have taken no step to guard against it, solace themselves when its

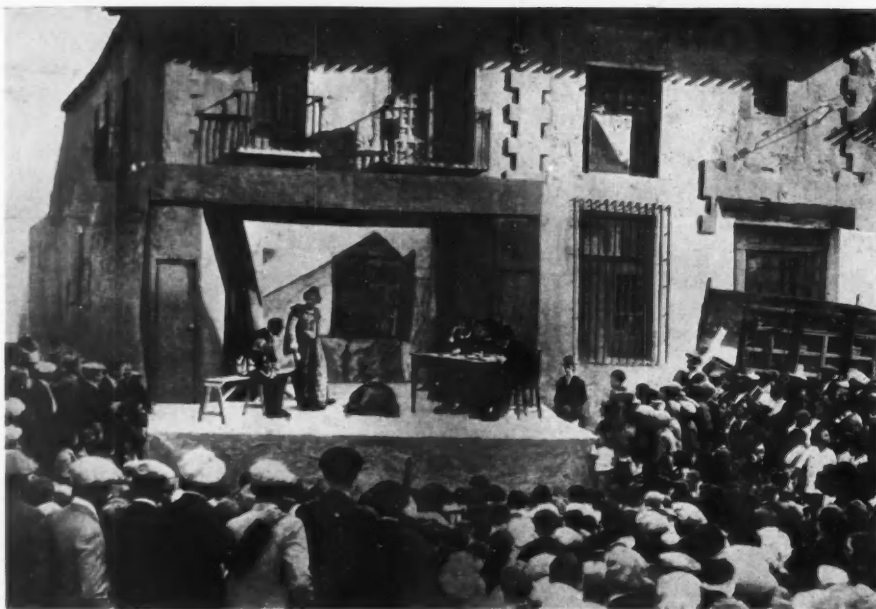
occurs by blaming the insensibility of the audience. But the insensibility is more often their own. The producer must watch unceasingly for inopportune comedy or bathos, and eliminate it (if he can do so in no other way) by ruthless cutting. It is kinder to the author to cut a phrase or a line which the players are incapable of rendering than to subject him to untimely laughter. It must not be thought, however, that laughter is necessarily incongruous in a pathetic or emotional scene. The test of congruity is whether the audience is reacting sympathetically to the emotions of the persons in the play, or unsympathetically (though not necessarily unkindly) to the *gaucherie* of the actors who impersonate them: whether the laughter is inside or outside the orbit of dramatic illusion.

(b) Opportune laughter. In comedy or farce the producer can never anticipate all the points which will win laughter. But he should be clear on the points which, if they do not secure a laugh, will have failed to convey their full significance. Amateurs habitually waste many laughs, and nearly always a wasted laugh means a point not made. The producer



SCENE FROM "THE MIRACLE" AS
PRODUCED BY MAX REINHARDT,
DORTMUND, 1927.

Of special interest in view of the
different setting designed for the
present revival at the Adelphi
Theatre, London.



OPEN AIR PLAY IN SPAIN. A COMPANY OF TRAVELLING ACTORS FROM THE MISSION PEDAGÓGICA, MADRID, IN A SCENE FROM CERVANTES' "THE JUDGE OF DIVORCES." REPRODUCED BY PERMISSION OF "THE TIMES."

These players represent an interesting development in the social drama in Spain, and their aims are analogous to those of the Arts League of Service over here, a striking contrast to the Spanish Theatre described in Mr. Locke's article in this number of "Drama."

MORE PRACTICAL NOTES ON PLAY-PRODUCTION

must make allowance for the perceptible time-lag in the response to the subtler points of comedy, knowing that if the laughter does not follow, the subtlety has been lost. He must ensure that the climax of a comic point is not turned to an anti-climax by an invitation to laugh too early. Only experience can teach the perfect command of laughter (such as that possessed by the best low comedians) but the producer should at least study the matter and give his actors what help he can. The inexperienced actor, who has not yet acquired a stage sense, seldom knows what to do with a laugh when he has got it.

2. *DIALOGUE IS A MATTER OF GIVE AND TAKE.* The failure of actors to play to each other is one of the commonest forms of weak production. In the conduct of dialogue acting and reacting must be complementary. It takes at least two players inter-acting simultaneously to convey its full significance, not (as many amateurs seem to think) two players acting alternately. The true effect of dialogue is achieved by small reactions of the listener, which cannot be described in general terms. But it may convey some idea of the weakness referred to if dramatic dialogue is conceived as a game of ball. In the good production thrower and catcher are alert and active continuously, watching and anticipating when they are not throwing or catching: in the bad production there is no catching, but one player takes the ball, throws it in the air, and then puts it down for another to take up. Put in another way, dialogue should be a matter of give and take: in the bad production it all give and no take. The experienced producer knows that many a point is made and many a laugh scored not by the speaker but by the listener.

A question cognate with this often vexes the amateur actor,—whether in speaking he should look at the person addressed or towards the audience. As far as a rule can be given, he should, of course, look at the person addressed; though obviously a persistent profile may become tiresome, and some lines (if, for example, they are reflective or charged with dramatic irony) are more effective spoken to the audience. But the point not appreciated is that the turning of the head away from or towards the speaker,—with the manner in which it is turned,—is one of the most useful reactions for helping to bring out the signifi-

cance of dialogue. It is often right for A to speak a sentence facing the audience solely that he may mark the special significance of B's next speech by a quick turn of the head. In the timing of such small reactions there is no latitude. It is either just right or all wrong.

3. *SPEED THE DEPARTING.* The stage exit is a common occasion of technical weakness and produces many of those trifling hitches which are fatal to the audience's "suspension of disbelief." It is often plain that insufficient rehearsal has taken place with an actual door, and the actors, even if they know which way it goes, open and close it by the light of nature,—a light which shines but rawly on the stage. The producer who has given thought to the matter knows that there are few right and many wrong ways of using a stage door. Even curtained exits have their pitfalls. But apart from fumbling and awkwardness, too little attention is paid to the timing of an actor's last speech before his exit. Generally speaking his last words should be said at the door. This rule has no relation to the fetish of the old-fashioned actor who requires a remark to "get him off the stage." It is dictated by the necessity to avoid a meaningless silence while the outgoing actor moves to the door. There are, of course, occasions when such a silence is anything but meaningless, and the walk to the door may be in itself a more telling last speech than any words.

In this connection it may be noticed how often those left on the stage will speak words not meant to be heard by the person departing, before he has closed the door. On such occasions the moment spent in watching the door shut is well repaid by the greater significance it gives to what follows.

4. *SEARCH BETWEEN THE LINES FOR THE STAGE BUSINESS.* Only an unimaginative producer is tied down to printed stage directions. In most acting editions of modern plays the stage directions are extremely full, but they usually refer to a larger stage and a more elaborate setting than are used in amateur performance. The wise producer will adapt to suit his own conditions. In older plays where the book gives only a bare minimum of essential actions, he is faced with the creative task of filling in the outline and doing what some professional

MORE PRACTICAL NOTES ON PLAY-PRODUCTION

producer has done for the modern play. Provided he interprets correctly the characters, the mood of the play and the intention of the author, his hands are free. Many producers fail entirely to rise to this opportunity. The invention of stage business requires imagination and resource. It must not be dragged in to secure a cheap laugh or to gain an irrelevant effect. It must be inherent in the play, and should illuminate character or situation as by a shaft of unexpected light. It can often be introduced to give brilliant point to a necessary movement which may otherwise be awkward. The producer who contributes no original touches of this kind in an old play has failed to provide the author with the expert co-operation on which he counted.

An effective piece of business often loses its edge and becomes blurred in the course of rehearsal, so that by the time it meets with an audience it is pointless. Only the clear cut and definite can convey significance on the stage.

5. **ON PUTTING IN MORE ON THE NIGHT.** Many a producer is betrayed by the tendency of certain amateurs to keep something in reserve for the actual performance. With inexperienced actors the matter in reserve most frequently finds expression in overacting, restlessness, improvised business and false emotional emphasis, which, while they may on occasion add some false glitter to an individual performance, may also upset the whole balance of the play. The producer cannot insist too often that all the actors' tricks must be brought out for approval at rehearsals. The whole idea of "putting in more on the night" is amateurish (in the worst sense), selfish, unintelligent, and utterly to be condemned. It is true that every actor, if he be a real actor, will be different on "the night"; he has rehearsed in a vacuum, and it is not till the emotional circuit is completed by the response of an audience that impersonated character and simulated emotion come to life. But the difference must be in essence and not in externals, and the actor must rigidly confine himself within the same movements, gestures and general method of attack as he has used at rehearsals.

6. **THE PERFECT PROMPTER.** The more serious spirit in amateur drama to-day leads most actors to be word-perfect, but the

prompter must inevitably be a more prominent member of an amateur than a professional company. Rightly treated he can be less prominent than he is. A bad "dry-up," which some producers regard with equanimity as an unavoidable mishap, does irreparable harm, involving as it does the collapse of the whole structure of dramatic illusion. Mrs. Malaprop reverts to Mr. X, the doctor's wife, who has forgotten her words again. The audience, however tolerant they may be, cannot suspend their disbelief under such conditions.

The essential thing is that prompts should be given *instantly* when required, but not at the intentional pauses. A quick prompt is rarely heard by the audience. Even if (as often happens) the prompter attends only a few rehearsals, he can still do his task efficiently with a properly marked copy. The text should be marked with a coloured line at every point where a pause of more than a second occurs, and a double line for pauses of several seconds. (Unless the producer is in a position to do this, he has but a very sketchy idea of the timing of the play). The prompter should then be instructed: "Except as shown by the lines in your book, if ever you have had time to say 'one thousand' at the end of a sentence, don't look for signals of distress, but *prompt at once*." This may sound like a counsel of perfection, but it has been done, and it is worth doing. A production which falls below the standard of timing implied is unfinished.

The points of weakness dealt with in this and the previous article fall into two classes (1) errors in finish due to neglect of the technical devices for conveying significance; (2) blunders, hitches, and *gaucheries* which break the spell of dramatic illusion. Most of the latter could be eradicated in the course of rehearsal if the producer were less often guilty of uncritical complacency, and subjected every line and action to the test: "Have I considered what effect I am here trying to obtain, and have I obtained it convincingly?" Words or actions which are unconvincing must somehow be made to seem inevitable. It is but bare justice to the author to cut or alter the text, if necessary, to suit the abilities of the actors. No detail is so unimportant that it can be left to chance, rather than forced into conformity with the producer's—that is,

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the author's—purpose. The producer should not forget that he has valuable advisers in his cast, however inexperienced they may be as actors, since no technical knowledge is required to judge whether an intended effect is or is not obtained. Their opinion as spectators is not lightly to be set aside, and the producer who goes against the consensus of their judgment is generally wrong.

A word about the audience. At present most audiences extend to amateurs a misplaced tolerance. They recognise two different standards of good acting,—professional and amateur,—when there is but one. They watch with genial indulgence performances which they would never tolerate from professionals. This indulgence does no good to the amateur movement. It should be the

aim of all serious producers to do what so many have already done,—so to raise the standard of their attainments that audiences will be inclined to exact a higher standard from all amateurs. A first step is to invite, and publish, expert and ruthless criticism as many producers already do. If it be maintained that amateurs cannot hope to reach the professional level, the answer is that for most amateurs this is true, but while they expect support from the public, they should at least endeavour to come somewhere near it. There is but one art of the theatre, though it has many mansions. Whether amateurs shall have the right of entry to one of them rests with the imagination, the diligence, and above all the technical knowledge of their producer.

A JUDGE AT SEA

By Evelyn Oules

LAND at Town Hall after asking the way three times. Must remember to leave twenty instead of five minutes to get back to station. Find solid crowd surging on steps. Beg its pardon politely, and ask to pass. No result. Thank crowd firmly in anticipation, and say I must pass, without the slightest effect. Throw politeness to winds, strike out right and left, and finally bore small hole through the mass. Fierce female at door demands my ticket. Shake head breathlessly, and submit to searching examination. No, not a member. Nor a performer. Not even a producer! When able to get in a word, own to being the judge. Magical result!

Find self flung into darkened hall, seething with hungry, hostile faces. Flounder through tossing waves to insecure raft in mid-ocean, guarded by Scylla and Charybdis. Clutch two out-stretched hands, and realise that Scylla is Chairman, and Charybdis the Secretary of the County Community Competition Festival Committee. Hear all round the wild waves saying if they don't start at once they will never get through, and why are Judge's trains always late? Fling myself on raft, grasp programme, extract note-book, pencil, and cough-lozenges. Bell rings hysterically, and curtain goes up with a jerk.

Item No. 1. "Grandma's new Gramophone." Stage filled with mob caps, check aprons, and smock frocks all talking at once. From buzzing sounds assume language to be dialect of sorts, probably Somerset. Waves are screeching, so suspect humour, and work up brave smile. Smocks and aprons by now are laboriously "Gathering Peascods" to gramophone accompaniment, (presumably Grandma's), so make use of blessed respite to note that this is "A typical farce of rural life one hundred years ago. Racy wit and native idiom." Look up during lull to find Scylla snapping in my ear, "Not a dry eye in the audience," and noses being blown all round. Stop smiling abruptly. Change "farce" to "drama," and "racy wit" to "poignant intensity." Luckily remember gramophone just in time, and scratch out "hundred years ago."

"Item No. 2, "Mad Scene from Hamlet." Feel more at home. King and Queen easily recognisable by crowns and sceptres. Ophelia's face invisible, but jump to conclusion that figure staggering under hanging garden and haystack cannot be anyone else. Make note of fact that gramophone accompaniment to song drowned Ophelia. Discovered bad joke too late when reading out criticisms from platform.

A JUDGE AT SEA

Become aware suddenly that a formidable billow has separated itself from its fellows, and is bearing down on me. Confused muttering becomes gradually articulate, and find I am being told that I really ought to know that the next team are all busy people, and have only been able to run through their parts three times counting the dress rehearsal, so would I take this into consideration when allotting the marks, also that the fireplace was made by the gardener who did so well in the Great War? Fearing repetition of parable of importunate widow, about to agree to anything when wave is swept away by indignant Charybdis, and put in her place. Curtain again goes up.

Programme states baldly that "Item 3" is an "Original Play" and no more. Distinctly puzzling. Suggestion of the symbolic about black hangings festooned with vine-leaves, but gardener's fireplace, kettle, and tea-things must mean realism. From snatches of conversation that float over the footlights, helped by the prompter, deduce play to be one of these stark kitchen dramas we hear so much about. Gets starker and starker!

Items Nos. 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 rather misty. General impression of old gentlemen in dressing-gowns and white beards, masterful ladies swathed in drawing-room curtains, jiggling jingling clowns, Joan-of-Arc-like females in shining armour, etc. Shakespeare again? Probably scenes from the "Henry's" if I could see to read the programme. On second thoughts might as easily belong to the "Richard" batch. Start composing cautious criticism to conceal ignorance of the historical plays.

Waves seem settling down to monotonous drone, probably awed or bored by the classics. Distant ripple from stage goes on and on and on. Remember wishing to goodness rivulet would empty itself for good and all into ocean.....

Open eyes to find stage occupied by number of people in modern clothes sitting round dazzling soup-tureen. Programme reassures me as to their being real people, not another play. Hopes of refreshment crushed by hearing that the Judge will now criticise the performances, and award the Cup to the Winners. Recover several pages of notes (unnumbered) from floor, and do lightning sum, eventually deciding to bracket two teams

equal winners, and let them fight for the soup-tureen. Happiness not increased by whispered command from Scylla to say something nice about everybody, because last year the Judge was so horrid. Rack brains for eight different nice things to say, but can only think of four and a half.

Watch with horror Charybdis chiding her barking waves into attention, and all crests turned in my direction. Draw deep breath. Resolve to write to British Drama League about desirability of non-competitive Competitions, and prepare to swim for it!

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Theatre Royal Drury Lane, Ltd.,
London, W.C.2.

DEAR SIR,

I am going to begin by quoting a letter I have received from the Princess Royal:—

Harewood House, February 24th, 1932.

Dear Mr. Grossmith,

I have been wondering if it would be possible for you to again approach the Amateur Dramatic Societies in the way you did after the War when so much money was raised for "Warriors' Day." If they could be induced to give performances for the League of Mercy it would indeed be wonderful.

Believe me,

Yours sincerely,

MARY.

Now will the League help me as Her Royal Highness suggests? That is to say, will your Societies give *One Performance* during 1932 in aid of the League of Mercy which was founded by King Edward with the sole object of raising funds for the support of our Hospitals?

I should be most grateful if they would say "Yes," and in that happy event, would they indicate an approximate time when the Performance could be held?

The sum realised by performances given in response to my appeal to the Dramatic and Operatic Societies of Great Britain for "Warrior's Day" in 1922 was £39,000, but I should like to point out that this result was made up by returns varying from one hundred pounds to one hundred pence. Even the smallest amount was gratefully acknowledged as it will be in the present instance. Hoping for your favourable reply,

Yours sincerely,

GEORGE GROSSMITH.

Southport W.E.A. Thespians are on the look-out for three *new* one-act plays for production at a B.D.L. Preliminary Festival during the coming winter. Their Secretary (Frank Douglas, 12, Bath Street, Southport, Lancs.), will be pleased to receive for consideration by the Committee suitable unpublished and unproduced one-act plays. No play can be considered which will exceed forty minutes in performance. All unaccepted manuscripts will be returned to the authors.

BRITISH DRAMA LEAGUE NOTES



THE JOURNAL OF
THE BRITISH DRAMA LEAGUE
 INCORPORATING
 THE VILLAGE DRAMA SOCIETY

President
LORD HOWARD DE WALDEN

Chairman of the Council:
VISCOUNT ESHER.

Secretary: **GEOFFREY WHITWORTH.**

Hon. Treasurer: **ALEC REA.**

MSS. for publication in DRAMA will be considered if accompanied by stamps for return if unsuitable. All Enquiries should be addressed to the Hon. Secretary at the Office of the League, 8 Adelphi Terrace, London, W.C.2.

Telephone: **TEMPLE BAR 8507-8.**

Neither the Editor nor the Drama League as a whole accepts any responsibility for the opinions expressed in signed articles printed in this Journal.

FOR the convenience and information of members we are re-printing in this number of "Drama" the Rules of the British Drama League as revised and passed at the Annual General Meeting of the League which was held at 8, Adelphi Terrace on Wednesday, June 29th. The Minutes of that meeting will be printed, as usual, in the October number, since the magazine is not published in the holiday months of August and September. It is too late to print a detailed account of the meeting, but we are able to state that the most important item was the announcement that a satisfactory agreement has been made with the Scottish Community Drama Association which should solve all outstanding difficulties. The offices of the League itself will remain open throughout the holiday period, but the Library will be closed from August 1st—22nd, during which time the ordinary issue of books will be suspended. The Library will likewise be closed on the afternoon of Thursday, July 7th from 5-7 p.m., for the Annual General Meeting of the Shakespeare Memorial National Theatre Committee.

This summer has been remarkable for a revival of interest in the Ballet and kindred dance forms. Madame Wigman, and Monsieur and Madame Sakharoff paid important visits to London, and the Camargo Society has just concluded a highly successful season at the Savoy Theatre. The first International Summer School of Dance to be held in England is also announced at Buxton from July 25th to August 20th. The Organizer of this School is Miss Sali Lobel and full particulars can be obtained from the Summer Schools Offices at the Sali Lobel Studios, 260, Oxford Road, Manchester.

Detailed prospectuses and time-tables are now available of our Holiday Schools at Mumbles, South Wales, in August, and Braithwaite, near Keswick, in early September. An innovation at Keswick is the Community Drama Days, running from 11.30 a.m. to 6.30 p.m. and designed to meet the needs of people living at a little distance who will come as on an excursion. Plans for further Schools during autumn are already taking shape. Under the auspices of the Scouts, we shall arrange an evening course in Westminster to which Guiders and Club-leaders will be invited. Several provincial centres are enquiring for elementary Week-end Schools, and there will probably be an advanced evening course for Londoners. Full particulars will be announced in the October issue of *Drama*, and will be obtainable from the Schools' Organiser early in September.

Our readers scarcely need reminding of the other chief attractions during August: the Shakespeare Season at the new Memorial Theatre at Stratford; Sir Barry Jackson's Festival at Malvern with plays old and new—the newest by Mr. Bernard Shaw; and the Summer School of the Central School of Speech Training and Dramatic Art held partly in London, Oxford, Stratford and Malvern. Full particulars of this school, which begins in London towards the end of July and lasts for six weeks, may be obtained from Miss Elsie Fogerty, the Royal Albert Hall, Kensington, London, W.

RECENT BOOKS

Reviewed by Norman Marshall

"The Art of Mime." By Irene Mawer. Methuen. 7s. 6d.

"Choral Speaking." By Marjorie Gullan. Methuen. 3s. 6d.

"Fanny Kemble." By Dorothea de Bear Bobbé. Elkin Mathews & Marrot.

"The Captain of Kopenick." By Carl Zuckmayer. Bles. 7s. 6d.

"Modern Short Plays." (Third Series). University of London Press. 2s.

"Three Modern Plays and a Mime." Edited by John Hampden. Nelson. 9d.

"Twelve Short Plays." By Clifford Bax. Gollancz. 3s. 6d.

"Religious Plays." Edited by E. Martin Browne. Philip Allan. 1s. and 1s. 6d. each.

"Three Biblical Dramas." By Clarissa Graves. Nelson. 1s. 9d.

Outstanding among this list of books are those by

Miss Irene Mawer and Miss Marjorie Gullan, the acknowledged experts in their own particular branches of dramatic art. Conciseness and lucidity are characteristics of both books. There is a merciful absence of the usual sentimental rhapsodizing about the beauties of speech and movement, of vague and pretentious theorising over psychological values. Miss Mawer has divided her book into three parts. The first part is a history of mime; the second is a study of the technique of mime; the third deals with the value of mime in education. During recent years the art of mime has been sadly degraded by untrained enthusiasts who have seemingly thought that all that was necessary was to "enter into the spirit of the thing," with the result that mime is associated in many people's minds with some peculiarly exasperating exhibitions of "artiness." Miss Mawer's book serves as a reminder that mime is the oldest, the purest, and the most dignified of all forms of drama. "The Art of Mime" is not just a book for those who are interested in the wordless play; it is a book which should be read by every actor, dancer and producer who takes his work seriously. Even the actor condemned to that polite inactivity which is all the acting which the average fashionable West End comedy permits, will be able to add delicacy and subtlety to his work by a study of such a chapter as that in which Miss Mawer discusses the expressiveness of the smallest gestures of the hand in acting.

Miss Gullan's brief, clear and extremely practical book is intended mainly for conductors of verse-speaking choirs. It is written with special reference to the work of those concerned in adult education, and teachers of senior classes in schools. There is a long and carefully arranged list of passages both in verse and prose which have been found suitable for choral speaking. The whole subject is a highly technical one, and extremely difficult to discuss briefly and simply, but Miss Gullan has succeeded in explaining her methods with exceptional clarity and simplicity.

Mrs. de Bear Bobbé has written the first full length biography of Fanny Kemble, and written it, with industry rather than with distinction. Nevertheless, this is a very capable story of an exceptionally vivid and romantic figure who during her long and very varied life was the friend of so many of the most brilliant personalities of her century. In fact, there is some justification for the publisher's claim that "it may be said of Fanny Kemble that she *was* the nineteenth century—at its best."

The most interesting of the recently published plays is Carl Zuckmayer's "modern fairy-tale," "The Captain of Kopenick." It is a dramatisation of the famous episode of the cobbler who after spending most of his life in prison, bought a second-hand uniform, and exploited the almost magical powers which a uniform carried with it in pre-war Germany. I have heard it said that the satire of this brilliant indictment of militarism and officialdom is too peculiarly German to interest English audiences, but the play is written with such tremendous gusto and with so brilliant a sense of the theatre, that it is hard to believe that if it were acted and produced in the right spirit it could fail in any country.

The next two books give exceptionally good value to those in search of one-acters. The third series of "Modern Short Plays" includes four which will be new to most people: "Karl Ludwig's Widow" by "Saki," "The Golden Fisherman" by F. Sladen-Smith, "When the Whirlwind Blows" by Essex Dane, and a play by Dorothy Una Ratcliffe with the singularly clumsy and unattractive title of "Mary of Scotland in Wensleydale." Mr. John Hampden has achieved plenty of variety in his latest selectoin, which consists of an attractively idiotic farce, a comedy about Dickens, a play in verse and mime, and an extremely dramatic sketch in dialect for two women, which is only four pages in length. Another book which gives unusually generous measure is "Twelve Short Plays," in which Mr. Clifford Bax has collected his verse plays, "serious and comic." These twelve plays are remarkable for their variety, both of subject and technique.

Mr. Martin Browne, the Director of Religious Drama in the Diocese of Chichester, has arranged and edited four religious plays of very different types. "The Story of Christmas" is a mime play, with music selected from the hymnals and the Oxford Carol Book; "The Sacrifice of Isaac" is a brief and very simple play with only three characters; "The Maid Mary" and "Mary the Mother" are longer and more elaborate plays adapted from the "Ludus Coventrie." There is a short but admirable general preface to the series, dealing with the production of plays in a church. The "Three Biblical Dramas," on the other hand, are arranged for performance on an ordinary stage. Miss Clarissa Graves's introduction contains a much needed reminder that "though the words of the Bible have come down to us with very sacred associations, they are not all equally solemn in import, and any tendency to parsonic utterance, or to stiffness of movement, must be avoided."

RECENT ADDITIONS TO THE LIBRARY

A number following the title of a play shows the number of acts. The absence of a number indicates a play in one act. [R] signifies that the volume is in the reference Library; * that acting sets are available.

Aeschylus, *Prometheus Bound*. Translated by G. Murray, 6 m., 1 w., chorus, sprs. Andrews, W. H., and Dearmer, G., *The Referee*, 7 m., 2 w. Arlett, V. I., *Making it pay*, 7 w. Armstrong, A., *At the Coach nad Horses*, 5 m., 1 g. Arthurs, G., and Miller, A., *Marry the Girl*, III, 8 m., 4 w., sprs.

Barry, P., *Holiday*, III, 7 m., 5 w. Barwell, P., and Morland, N., *Dawn was theirs*, III, 8 m., 6 w. Berkeley, R., *The Dweller in the Darkness*, 4 m., 2 w.: *The Queen of Moturea*, 5 m., 2 w. Blair, P., *Drumgarth*, 6 m., 2 w. Bruckner, F., * *Elizabeth of England*, 12 scenes, 21 m., 5 w., sprs. Buchan, S., *The Little House*, 3 w., 1 ch. Burnett, F. H., *Little Lord Fauntleroy*, III, 8 m., 3 w., 1 b.

Chalmers, P., *The little pagan faun*, 6 characters, 5 characters mute, sprs. Clarke, A., *The Flame*, 4 w., sprs. Claudel, P., *The Satin Slipper*, IV. Corrie, J., *The New Gamekeeper* 2 m., 2 w.: *The Tallyman*, 2 m., 3 w., 1 g. Coward, N., * *Cavalcade*, III, 13 m., 19 w., 1 b., 1 g., sprs.

Davis, H. L., *Ten o'clock*, 4 m., 1 w. De Zglinitzki, H., *Mother of Judas*, 7 m., 2 w., sprs. Drew, M., *Screening the Screen Scene*, 5 m., 2 w., sprs. Dukcs, A., *Five plays of other times*.

Ellis, W., *Almost a Honeymoon*, III, 6 m., 2 w.

Famous plays of 1931. Farna, W. J., *A matter of Choice*, 4 m., 5 w. Field, R., *At the Junction*, 2 m., 1 w., 1 g.: *Bargains in Cathay*, 4 m., 3 w.: *The cross-stitch Heart*, 2 m., 2 w., 1 g.: *Greasy Luck*, 2 m., 2 w.: *Miss Ant*, *Miss Grasshopper and Mr. Cricket*, 1 m., 2 w. Forwood, M. E., *At the "Snob Court" Hotel*, 5 w.: *No Smoke without Fire*, 1 m., 2 w.

Gow, R., *Henry*, 10 m. Grant, N., *The Unseen Company*, 3 m., 1 w. Gunn, W. E., *Scott of Abbotsford*, Pro., III, 9 m., 6 w., 1 g., sprs. Guthrie, T., *Squirrel's Cage and two other microphone plays*.

Hampden, J., ed. * *Six modern plays and two old plays for little players: Three modern plays and a mime*. Harwood, H. M., *So Far and no Fairer*, 4 scenes, 7 m., 7 w. Hay, I., * *Mr. Faintheart*, III, 7 m., 5 w. Haythorne, M., *Three one-act plays*. Herbert, A. P., *Derby Day*, III, 8 m., 4 w., 1 b., sprs.: *Helen*, III, 13 m., 6 w., sprs. Hines, L. J., and King, F., *These things shall be*, Pro., 4, ep., 11 m., 6 w. Hodson, J. L., *Harvest*, 3 m., 3 w. Hole, W. G., *The Gates of Ur*, III, 11 m., 4 w., sprs. Housman, L., *Little Plays of St. Francis, Second series*.

Jacobs, W. W., *Matrimonial openings*, 2 m., 3 w. Jeans, R., * *Lean Harvest*, III, 11 m., 8 w., 2 b., 1 g.

Kilpatrick, F. A., *Virginia's Husband*, III, 6 m., 4 w.

Lawrence, C. E., *The Day before Yesterday*, 4 m., 4 w. Lowndes, M. A. B., *What really happened*, Pro., 2, ep., 9 m., 6 w., 2 b.

McIntyre, J., and Yuill, A. W., *The Spanish Galleon*, 4 m., 1 w. Mackenzie, R., * *Musical Chairs*, III, 4 m., 4 w. Mac Manus, P., *The Toy Heart*, 4 w. Marriott, J. W., ed., * *Best one-act plays of 1931*. Matthews, A. K., *Courting*, III, 4 m., 4 w. Merivale, B., and Fleming, B., *None but the Brave*, III, 14 m., 3 w. Moffat, G., *Bunty pulls the Strings*, III, 5 m., 5 w., sprs.: *Grawny*, III, 8 m., 5 w.: *A Scrape of the Pen*, III, 6 m., 10 w., sprs.: *Sadie tangles the Strings*, IV, 6 m., 9 w., sprs. Molière, J. B. P., *Four Molière comedies, adapted by F. Anstey*. Moore, G., *The Passing of the Essens*, III, 12 m. Moorhouse, R., ed., *Plays for Middle Forms*. Mussolini, B., and Forzano, G., *Napoleon*, 12 scenes, 66 m., 6 w., 1 b., sprs. Mygatt, T. D., *Grandmother Rocker*, 5 m., 7 w., 3 ch.

O'Neill, E. G., *Mourning becomes Electra: a trilogy*. Osborn, P., *The Vinegar Tree*, III, 4 m., 3 w. Ould, H., *Miser of Rogesford*, 1 m., 4 w.

Pakington, M., *All Camouflage*, 3 m.: *Tear up the joker!* 2 m., 1 w. Peach, L. du G., *Crook's Christmas*, 4 m., 1 w.: *Radio Plays*.

Reid, E. T., *The Fortune-hunter*, 1 m., 2 w. Reynolds, E. R., *Card Queens*, 2 m., 2 w. Ridley, A., * *The Ghost Train*, III, 8 m., 4 w. Roberts, C., *The second best bed*, 3 m., 3 w. Rubinstein, H. F., *The Dickens of Gray's Inn*, and *On the Portsmouth Road*; *Posterity*, 3 m., 3 w., 5 m. mute.

Salaman, D. C., *The Tale of a Cat and other plays*. Shairp, M., * *The Crime at Blossoms*, III, 12 m., 9 w., 1 b., 1 g. Shiels, G., *Two Irish Plays*. Sierra, G. M., * *Take two from one*, III, 6 m., 17 w. Simpson, R., and Drawbell, J. W., *Who goes next?* III, 13 m. Smith, F. S., *The Resurrection of Joseph*, 4 m., 3 w. Smith, N. R., Mrs. Siddons, IV, 6 m., 6 w. Stevens, H. C. G., *Sir Herbert is deeply touched, and other plays*. Stewart, H. D., *Rizzio's Boots*, 3 m., 2 w. Stocks, M. D., *King Herod*, Pro., 5 scenes, ep., 18 m., 1 w., 4 b., 1 g., sprs. Strindberg, A., *Master Olof and other plays*. Sylvaine, V., *The Actress*, 2 m., 2 w.

Thompson, E., *Plays and Pageants*. Tretiakov, S., *Roar China*, 9 scenes, 22 m., 8 w., 1 b., sprs. Turner, T., *You have your choice*, 3 m., 2 w.

Van Druten, J., * *Somebody Knows*, Pro., III, ep., 11 m., 5 w., sprs.: * *There's always Juliet*, III, 2 m., 2 w. Vosper, F., *All is not Gold*, 1 m., 2 w.: *Marry at Leisure*, III, 7 m., 7 w.

Waugh, E., *Vile Bodies*, 12 scenes, 29 m., 18 w. Weitzenkorn, L., *Five Star Final*, III, 16 m., 10 w. Wilder, T. N., * *The Long Christmas Dinner and other plays*. Winawer, B., *The Book of Job*, III, 8 m., 3 w. Wood, J., *Ruler of the House*, 1 m., 1 w., 1 b.

Young, H. I., * *Hawk Island*, III, 8 m., 5 w.

Zimmerman, H., ed., * *Plays of Jewish Life*.

RECENT ADDITIONS TO THE LIBRARY

BOOKS ON THE THEATRE

SETTINGS AND STAGE DECORATION.

Moussinac, L., [R] *The New Movement in the Theatre.*

COSTUME AND CUSTOMS.

Hartley, D., *Medieval Costume and Life.* Houston, M. G., *Ancient Greek, Roman and Byzantine Costume and Decoration.* Kelly and Schwabe, *Short History of Costume and Armour.* Komisarjevsky, T., *Costume of the Theatre.* Laver, J., *English Costume of the Eighteenth Century.*

ACTING.

Hicks, S., *Acting.*

BALLET-DANCE.

Beaumont, C. W., *History of Ballet in Russia.* Dalcroze, E. J., *Eurhythmics, Art and Education.*

PUPPETS.

Wilkinson, W., *Vagabonds and Puppets.*

HISTORY OF THE THEATRE—DRAMATIC HISTORY AND CRITICISM.

GENERAL.

Nicoll, A., *Masks, Mimes and Miracles.*

GREECE.

Norwood, G., *Greek Comedy.*

GREAT BRITAIN. (HISTORIES OF THEATRES).

Day, M. C., and Trewin, J. C., *Shakespeare Memorial Theatre.*

SHAKESPEARE.

Barton, D. P., *Links between Shakespeare and the Law.* Beza, M., *Shakespeare in Roumania.* Clark, C., *Shakespeare and the Supernatural.* Hotson, L., *Shakespeare v. Shallow.* Terry, E., *Four Lectures on Shakespeare.* Wilson, J. D., *The Essential Shakespeare. : Six Tragedies of Shakespeare.*

TWENTIETH CENTURY.

Ellehaug, M., *The Position of Shaw in European Drama. Striking Figures among Modern English Dramatists.*

BIOGRAPHY.

Archer, W., *William Archer*, by Col. Archer. Bernhardt, S., *Sarah Bernhardt*, by Halm. Craig, E. G., *Gordon Craig and the Theatre*, by Enid Rose. Hardwicke, C., *Let's Pretend.* Ibsen, H., *Life of Ibsen*, by Kolt. Kane, W., *Are we all met?* Shaw, G. B., *Frank Harris on Bernard Shaw.* Terry, E., *Ellen Terry and Bernard Shaw.* Ellen Terry, by E. G. Craig.

NEWS FROM NORTH AND SOUTH

IT must be a joyous experience for people with ideas—whether illusory or real—to perform in the Ellen Terry Barn Theatre at Smallhythe. One felt this very strongly during the progress of the three plays which were presented on June 4th by The Hazlewick Players and the Frogal Players. The whole atmosphere of the place, to say nothing of the advantages such a stage offered, lent itself to the particular plays chosen and gave to them a setting and an air no ordinary circumstances could have done.

"Green Broom," by Eileen Douglas, had its first performance. It is a tender dramatic plant which has its roots in an old ballad about a lazy young vendor who so charmed a pretty-pretty Princess that wedding bells were inevitable. The author, who also produced and acted in the play, had designed and made costumes that happily fitted its spirit and gave it pictorial charm. Miss Douglas was well served by her fellow players with the result that "Green Broom" flourished.

Edna St. Vincent Millay's "Aria da Capo" is essentially a play that needs an exposition such as Mr. Robert Newton's (who produced it for The Worth Players), before its full value becomes apparent. And even then one is left with a feeling that the author might have meant something different. Between the two schools that either think it pretentious rubbish and high symbolism there is a sad gulf. Perhaps because of the gulf (which is certainly a reflection on the play's lack of lucidity) both may be right. But that this queer commentary on the futility of loose thinking was well produced and acted there can be no doubt. The costumes by Joan Bond were lovely and the company made the play strangely moving.

The Frogal Players in the somewhat protracted and wordy "The Deuce is in Him" gave a full-blooded

example of 18th century farce. Everybody looked well, the play was always alive (even if it had some nervous moments) and Colonel Tamper's pseudo-wooden leg with which he so alarmed his lady-love and nearly lost her, stumped up and down the steps with delightful emphasis. The obvious enjoyment of the audience—sophisticated players and little boys who rocked with laughter—was sufficient indication of success.

JOHN BOURNE.

The above performance was successfully revived at the Ballet Club Theatre, Notting Hill Gate, on the evening of Wednesday, June 22nd, before a distinguished and appreciative audience.—Editor, *Drama*.

BATH Y.M.C.A. PLAYERS

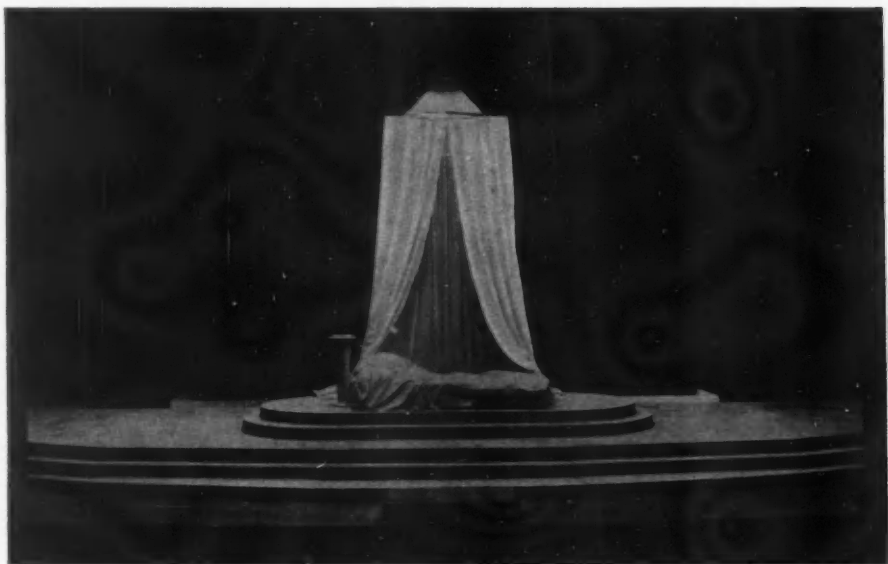
Two years ago a small group of drama enthusiasts met at the Bath Y.M.C.A. to discuss the possibility of producing a play. There was enthusiasm there but the group had no stage, no equipment. They asked Mr. Francis Ledbury, an original member of the Bath Citizen House Players to advise them and he was appointed Hon. Producer. At once the enthusiasts (some three of them) set to work to design and build a fit up stage to put up and take down in the Gymnasium, which serves as their Little Theatre. The stage is quite a substantial affair weighing nearly two tons, but so expert have the Hon. Technical Staff become that the stage can be taken down and packed away in less than two hours.

Their little gymnasium theatre only accommodates 200, and their performances are private. The last



Photo Copyright by Paul Shillabeer.

NOAH AND THE FLOOD. PUPPETS AND SET DESIGNED AND MADE BY CATHERINE CUMMINS AND PRODUCED IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE HOLYWELL PLAYERS, LONDON.



SETTING FOR THE LAST ACT OF "OTHELLO,"
DESIGNED BY EMIL PIRCHAN, AND PRODUCED
BY LEOPOLD JESSNER, STAATSTHEATER,
BERLIN, 1921.

Reproduced from "The New Movement in
the Theatre" By Moussinac, published by
Messrs. Harrap, and reviewed in the June
number of "Drama."

NEWS FROM NORTH AND SOUTH

show was a completely original Revue, which was written by Mr. P. J. Darke, with music by their Hon. Musical Director, Mr. Louis Field with additional numbers by the producer. So successful was the performance that on the last evening two houses had to be given, and thanks to the President (Mr. R. D. Wills) the Revue was played at the Bath Pump Room to two crowded houses, the proceeds being given to charity. To-day the Players number over thirty, with an orchestra of twelve.

During the time they have been in being they have successfully produced the following:—

- * "The Dumb Wife of Cheapside" (Ashley Dukes),
- * "R. U. R." (Karl Kapec).
- * "Plus Fours" (H. A. Vachell and H. Simpson)
- * "Bird in Hand" (John Drinkwater)
- * "Passing of the Third Floor Back" (J. K. Jerome)
- * "The 1932 Revue" (P. J. Darke and Louis Field).

* First Amateur performance in Bath.

† First performance in Bath by any company.

WELWYN DRAMA FESTIVAL

Performances of three new plays were awarded chief places in the Fourth Annual Welwyn Drama Festival which was held from June 6th to June 11th. The Welwyn Cup was won by the Beckenham Players and Shakespeare Society for their performance of "Murder Trial" (Sydney Box) which the adjudicator (Mr. Peter Creswell of the B.B.C.), typified as a "brilliant, pungent satire, very well done." "Murder Trial" also won the award for the best unpublished play, and the leading man—Mr. Colin Martin—was specially mentioned as having given an outstanding performance.

There was a tie for second and third places by the Bristol Drama and Clifton Arts Club in "A Knight Came Riding" (Cyril Roberts) and Welwyn Folk Players in "The Cab" (John Taylor). There were two very close runners-up—the Five and Four Players in "The Artist" (Chekov-Malteson) and St. Albans A.D. Players in "Chinese White" (Clarke-Smith). In the entries for the new play prize, second place was taken by "Young and so Fair" (Lal Morris) and third place by "The Cab" (Taylor).

On the last evening of the Festival the Chairman disclosed that difficulties had been experienced in getting a full week's entries so that two local Societies had to be approached to fill the gaps. It can again be recorded with satisfaction that all the winners were societies affiliated to the British Drama League who had had experience, obviously profitable, in the National Festival of Community Drama.

My own reactions to the Welwyn Festival were that a somewhat higher standard had been achieved, although there were two pitifully poor performances on the evenings I attended. The adjudication this year was not without facetiousness but was more helpful to the performers than on previous occasions. The main trouble with the Welwyn Festival, however, is that it is purely a competition with no clearly defined dramatic aims. The organisers inform entrants that it is on similar lines to the National Festival but as Welwyn dissociates itself from that institution (whose aims are not in doubt) it is difficult to reconcile the one with the other.

JOHN BOURNE.

HULL PLAYGOERS' SOCIETY

The Playgoers' Theatre, Hull, maintained solely by the amateur effort of the Society, has had a very good season. The careful selection of the Syllabus of Readings and Recitals had the expected reward in keeping up Membership and large attendances from November to April. Each fortnightly Meeting is now very definitely an event.

Those who saw or read of the first public production, "The Yellow Jacket," which opened before the delegates of the British Drama League Conference and the civic officials, may be interested to know what happened thereafter.

Performances of not less than a week each were given of "The Yellow Jacket," "Fanny's First Play," "The Wild Duck," "Nine Till Six," and "As You Like It." This was the Theatre's second season of five plays, and the increase in adult attendance over last year was 20%.

Nobody but the caretaker and booking clerks are paid. 96 speaking parts were played, of which 40 were taken by people appearing for us for the first time in or after "The Yellow Jacket." Once more we commend the production of Shakespeare for schools. Played briskly in good costumes, with curtain setting and one interval only, a Shakespeare play gives your actors invaluable training, and your audiences the very rare opportunity of seeing Shakespeare on the stage.

Hull is admittedly a happy hunting ground for the amateur. There is a large, compact and isolated population and touring companies come not near. But it is a hunting ground which has been cleared by hard work backed by a jealously guarded artistic conscience. It is great fun to run your own theatre. The onslaught of the talkies has not affected the interest of intelligent people in intelligent plays. The growth of their number is indicated by the publisher's advertisements. An amateur society setting about the idea of establishing its own headquarters will find many things in its favour to-day.

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The play, which was staged at St. Barnabas' Hall, Hove, and at Knolly Hall, Preston, was produced by Miss Olive Von der Heyde, L.G.S.M. (Eloc.). Miss Von der Heyde is to be congratulated on an ambitious production.

RULES OF THE BRITISH DRAMA LEAGUE

Incorporating the Village Drama Society.

I. TITLE OF THE LEAGUE

The name of the League to be "The British Drama League Incorporating the Village Drama Society."

II. OBJECT OF THE LEAGUE

The aim of the British Drama League is to assist the development of the Art of the Theatre, and to promote a right relation between Drama and the Life of the Community.

III. MEMBERSHIP

Membership of the League shall be open to all persons who are concerned with the practice or enjoyment of the Art of the Theatre. Membership shall be acquired by the payment of an annual subscription, which payment shall be taken as signifying the subscribers' agreement with the Rules of the League.

IV. SUBSCRIPTIONS

(a) BY INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP

The annual subscription shall be £1 is., which shall entitle to all privileges afforded by the League, including the receipt of the League's Monthly Magazine, a vote at General Meetings, and the right to form affiliated Groups.

(b) BY GROUP MEMBERSHIP

Any Organisation of not less than ten persons may become affiliated to the League on payment of an annual subscription of £1 is. As an affiliated Organisation it shall, in the person of its duly nominated representative, acquire and exercise all the privileges afforded by the League. Societies in villages of not more than 4,000 inhabitants may affiliate to the League on the terms of the agreement with the Village Drama Society, which have been deposited in the offices of the League.

The policy and management of an affiliated Organisation shall, subject to these rules, be left entirely in its own hands.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS, whether of individuals or of Organisations shall be payable in advance to the Hon. Treasurer of the League. Subscriptions become due on January 1st or June 30th. Notice of resignation of membership or of affiliation shall be sent to the Secretary in writing one calendar month before the expiration of the subscription, otherwise the membership shall be held to be continued, and the member or Organisation shall be liable to pay the subscription for the following twelve months.

V. HONORARY MEMBERSHIP

Persons who have rendered conspicuous service to the Art of the Theatre may be elected Honorary Members by a vote of the Council.

VI. CANCELLATION OF MEMBERSHIP

Any member or Organisation whose conduct shall be deemed by the Council to be opposed to the interests of the League may be struck off the List of Members, upon which the subscription for the year shall be returned. But any member, or Organisation shall have the right to appeal against such a decision to the next General Meeting of the League, on the requisition, to be made within a month of the decision, in the case of members, of at least ten fellow-members; or, in the case of an Organisation on the requisition of the Secretaries of at least five other affiliated organisations. Pending the next General Meeting, the membership in question shall be held to be in suspense.

RULES OF THE BRITISH DRAMA LEAGUE

VII. GOVERNMENT OF THE LEAGUE

(a) The Government of the League and the disposition of its Funds shall be vested in the Council, which shall consist of the President and 31 elected members. Twenty-one members of the Council shall be elected at the Annual General Meeting in accordance with Section *b*. With a view to providing for extra-Metropolitan representation on the Council ten additional members shall be elected in the manner provided for in Section *i*.

(b) The President and Vice-Presidents shall be elected by the Council and shall hold office for one year, and shall be eligible for re-election.

(c) The Council shall also elect from their own number an Hon. Treasurer, who shall hold office for one year and be eligible for re-election; and appoint a Secretary (Honorary or otherwise) who may or may not be one of their own number.

(d) The Council may appoint committees or sub-committees for special objects from their own body, with or without the addition of others, and shall define their duties and powers—the Chairman of the Council, Hon. Treasurer and the Secretary (Honorary or otherwise) to be an ex-officio member of any such committee.

(e) The Council shall be empowered to make by-laws, but such by-laws must be ratified at the next ensuing General Meeting of the League, for incorporation in the Rules of the League, if approved.

(f) The Council shall meet at least four times in each year, and on other occasions when summoned by the Secretary. Eight members of the Council shall form a quorum. The Secretary shall give to each member seven days' notice of meeting and the nature of the business to be discussed, but the accidental omission to give such notice, or the non-receipt of such notice, shall not invalidate the proceedings of the Council.

(g) The Council may co-opt members to fill any vacancies on the Council, but such co-opted members must retire for re-election at the next ensuing General Meeting; and at each Annual General Meeting one-third of the duly elected members under Section *b* must retire and the whole of the members under Section *i*. Any retiring members shall be eligible for re-election.

(h) All nominations for vacancies on the Council of members elected at the Annual General Meeting shall be in writing, signed by two members of the League as proposer and seconder, and accompanied by the consent in writing of the candidate to serve as a member of the Council if elected. The nomination and consent must be sent to the Secretary on or before June 1st in each year.

(i) The election of the additional ten members of the Council representing extra-Metropolitan areas shall be carried out in the following way:—Excluding London and Middlesex, five Areas shall be constituted with five Area Committees to be recognised by the Council. Each Area Committee shall have the right to nominate one representative on the Council. A second representative for each Area shall be elected by Ballot papers distributed from the offices of the League. Each affiliated organisation and individual member shall be entitled to nominate one candidate. Each affiliated Society and individual member to have one vote. Nominations must be sent to the Secretary of the League on or before May 1st in each year.

(j) Any member of the Council who does not attend at least one Council Meeting in any one year shall automatically cease to be a member. The Council, however, reserves the right to recommend such member's re-election at the next Annual Meeting should they think fit to do so.

(k) The Council shall have power to appoint such paid officers as it thinks fit.

RULES OF THE BRITISH DRAMA LEAGUE

VIII. ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Each year the Council shall summon a Conference to consist of two delegates from each affiliated organisation. It shall also be open to individual members. It shall be held in some convenient place which shall be decided upon if possible at the previous Conference. Affiliated organisations and individual members shall be entitled, upon giving one month's notice in writing to the Secretary of the League, to bring before the Conference any questions affecting the League's development and the drama in general for the purpose of moving resolutions upon them.

The Chairman of the Conference, who shall have been appointed beforehand by the Council, may in his discretion admit other matters to the Agenda. Each organisation and individual present may cast one vote. The resolutions of the Conference shall be considered forthwith by the Council, and failing adaptation, they shall be referred to the next Annual General Meeting.

IX. GENERAL MEETINGS.

(a) There shall be an Annual General Meeting of the League held in London on a date before the last day of June in each year, to be fixed by the Council, for the purposes of:

- (1) Receiving the Report of the Council.
- (2) Receiving the Statement of Accounts.
- (3) Electing Auditors.
- (4) Filling up vacancies in the Council, whether caused by retirement in rotation or otherwise.
- (5) Considering and, if necessary, taking action with reference to any business or motion of which due notice has been given.

Any member desirous to bring forward any business at such meeting shall give notice thereof to the Council on or before the first day of June.

(b) Not less than fourteen days' notice of every General Meeting, specifying the place, the day, and the hour of the meeting, and in the case of special business the general nature of the business to be transacted thereat, shall be given to each affiliated Society and member at his last known address in the United Kingdom, in such form and manner as the Council may from time to time prescribe, but the accidental omission to give such notice to, or the non-receipt of such notice by, any member shall not invalidate the proceedings of any General Meeting.

(c) The Council of the League shall, by a vote of the majority of their full number, or on receipt of a requisition signed by at least fifteen members, direct the Secretary to convene a Special General Meeting of the members for the consideration of any urgent matter, and the resolutions adopted at such meetings shall have the same force as if adopted at the Annual General Meeting.

(d) Every General Meeting of the League shall be presided over by the President, or in his absence by one of the Vice-Presidents to be elected by the Council, or in their absence the meeting shall elect its own chairman. The chairman presiding at any meeting shall have an original and also a casting vote.

(e) The decision of a majority of the members present at a General Meeting and actually voting shall be decisive. The vote shall be taken by ballot if demanded by a majority of those present. Twenty members personally present shall form a quorum. No alteration of these rules shall be made except at a General Meeting.

X. DISSOLUTION OF THE LEAGUE.

The League shall not be dissolved without the assent of a majority of two-thirds of the members present at a General Meeting, and at least sixty days' notice shall be given to the members of any proposal to dissolve the League.

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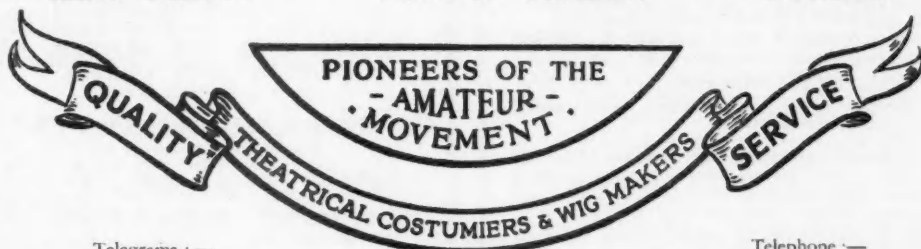
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